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in the number of tons sharing in this bounty will reduce the rate below ten per cent. of the vessel's cost.

As so large a part of the vessels recorded as engaged in the foreign trade are merely coasting craft unfit for off-shore service, a fleet of modern ships would be required and a great impulse to shipbuilding would be given. Yet the system is self-adjusting—as soon as our fleet reaches a size sufficient for the needs of our commerce, the bounties will become so small that there will be no temptation to excessive building.

And this system aids vessels when carrying cargoes from the United States, does not require any change in treaties, does not disturb our tariff adjustments, and can be put in force at once—none of which advantages can be claimed for discriminating duties.

Details are easily arranged: the building of steamers suitable for use as cruisers can be encouraged by providing for payment of bounties on two-thirds of their gross tonnage.

This is but a brief explanation of a measure which has been shaped after long and careful study of our own and foreign conditions. It is submitted as the simplest and most satisfactory solution of the shipping problem which present conditions will permit.

EDWARD C. PLUMMER.

A DEMOCRATIC ARISTOCRACY, OR VOLUNTARY SERVITUDE.

THERE is such a thing in history as the arrival of a nation at the bottom of a *cul de sac*—a logical *impasse*. It becomes impossible to proceed further without running against a blank wall—there is no thoroughfare.

The social problem in America has something of this aspect; the question is how to extricate ourselves from an impossible situation. We have committed ourselves to two opposite and mutually destructive principles—have supposed it possible to go on living our lives according to ancient moral ideas, whilst adopting a social and political philosophy that is modern and revolutionary.

Ancient society was solidly based on the consistent principles, first, that men are of social importance in proportion to what they make of themselves, and second, that the great mass of men that make nothing of themselves worth mentioning, are of no social importance at all except as the bearers of rude burdens for the superior class.

Modern society in general, and American society in particular, is insecurely based because it is based on inconsistent principles. We go on asserting in the anachronistic way the ancient moral theory of the self-made man, whilst denying the necessary consequence of that theory—which is caste.

The moral drama of the age is the futile attempt to reconcile ancient culture and privilege with modern science and humility. Our social predicament is entirely modern; there is nothing like it in the experience of antiquity. One may well fancy that the citizens of an ancient "democracy"—say that of Athens in the days of Pericles, wherein there were half a dozen unconsidered drudges to every citizen—would have raised a great shout of derision if anyone had proposed in their assembly that coarse labor should be esteemed honorable or that all men should be equal before the law. And if it could have been whispered to Plato that after 2,000 years and more a democracy in the West should wrestle with the problem how to perpetuate a society constituted, despite great differences of names and customs, substan-

tially like his own Athens—of two well-marked classes, but saturated through and through with the doctrine of human equality—he would, one may be sure, have smiled at our simplicity and would have explained that our only safety lay in denying the doctrine of equality in the most uncompromising terms and getting back with all speed to the ancient order. But if he could have been told further that his remedy was impossible of application, that this doctrine of equality was not a philosophic abstraction, but the political expression of a profound moral conviction that had been growing in the hearts of both the privileged and the unprivileged for more than eighteen hundred years, that it was too late to turn back, that the mass of the people would never submit to be told that their lives had meaning only with reference to the lives of an upper class, that the upper class itself would not, could not, accept the teaching, that the world was absolutely and finally committed to the tremendous thesis that there is a sacredness and worth in life quite apart from wealth and culture, and that, in consideration of the depth and mystery of this common element in human nature, the differences that grow out of personal achievements were coming to seem unimportant—if Plato could have been told all this, I am inclined to think that he would have risen to the emergency, and would have counselled that in such circumstances it might be well to consider whether this Christian theory, having shown such extraordinary power to turn the world into confusion and contradiction, might not contain within itself the principle of restoration—whether, in short, it might not be better for society to try the Christian theory further, and even to give it a clean sweep rather than die of the contradiction.

It is Christianity that has engendered in the people this ineradicable feeling of the value of life, the feeling that the commonest and poorest life has an inestimable worth in itself and cannot be regarded as merely ancillary to the life of another. It is this feeling that has motivated the age-long struggle for civil liberty, and that has in the Nineteenth Century culminated in democracy. But this feeling is the product of a partial and superficial Christianity; the deeper content of Christianity is the teaching that civil liberty is valuable only as preparing the way for a higher and more interior liberty—the liberty of self-devotion. Christianity has abolished involuntary servitude and established civil liberty in order that—being freed from the compulsion to serve—men may rise to the moral eminence of voluntary servitude. And this profounder word of Christianity is now in due process of spiritual evolution, the order of the day, the word of omen and prophecy for the Twentieth Century, the power of God for the renewal of the nations and the fulfilment of the moral significance of democracy.

Consider whether there be any other possible resource. Doubtless there are those that suppose it possible, through educational and refining processes, to carry the whole of the working class over into the condition of the class called cultivated. These fail to see, what is however a plain fact, that the maintenance of the cultivated class in the physical condition of that class as we find it in America to-day requires the existence of a class whose lives shall be engrossed in irksome labor. It is fair to warn the benevolent people who are striving in so many ingenious ways to “elevate the masses” that if they should ever succeed in doing it, they would certainly have to blacken their own shoes and they might be obliged to carry in their own coal. If everybody had an easy competency there would be a great dearth of cooks, and if we each and all kept a carriage, none of us could keep a coachman.

The essential thing about riches is not so much the possession of things as the possession of power over persons. And the only way to release the poor from the constraint of that power is for the rich to take upon their own shoulders some portion of the burdens that have been laid upon the poor.

Again, it is coming to be fashionable to suppose that socialism offers us a means of escape from our predicament.

But it must be borne in mind that our social problem is not primarily an economic problem. The root of the difficulty is not that the working-class is intolerably miserable, nor is it that they have set their hearts on fine tailoring and five-course dinners; the root of the difficulty is caste; the brand of social inferiority, the dealing with the labor of men as if it were a commodity, and the contempt of life involved in such dealing. The great strikes of the last few years have been carried on, not principally to get more wages—the vital interest and passion of the struggle have invariably centered in some matter touching the self-respect of the workmen, and their right to deal with their employers as with equals. It would be as true to say that the Revolutionary War was fought for cheap tea as to say that the labor question is only or principally a question of wages. The remark of that very keen observer, M. de Tocqueville, that Americans care more for equality even than for liberty, has had a good deal of justification in the "sympathetic" strikes of recent years, wherein multitudes of American workmen have cheerfully subjected themselves to the regimentation of labor unions and have made great material sacrifices to maintain the right of dealing with capitalists on equal terms.

The question is, then, Can socialism abolish caste? and the answer is plainly no. A socialistic government that should stop short of communism could be nothing other than a huge "syndicate" controlled by a privileged class. And a socialistic government that should go on to its logical conclusion in coercive communism would stand as the denial of all that the world has been learning for several thousand years. Community of goods enforced by the policeman, stands in the sharpest possible opposition to that voluntary and fraternal community of goods which is illustrated in the early church. The communism of the morning of Christianity is a simple and reasonable expression of the principle that the life is more than meat; but a regimentated, bureaucratic, police-court communism, resorted to at the end of the ages as the solution of a desperate class-question, would be the very carnival of envy and greed—a culminating triumph of the animal over the man.

The only solution of the social problem is voluntary servitude. It is necessary that there be raised up among us a class of persons of superior capacity, who might enjoy the privileges and immunities of an upper class who shall willingly submit to the conditions of life that are imposed upon the lower class. It seems not unreasonable to believe that were there but ten thousand such persons in the United States they would suffice—through the prevalence of that moral authority which is always commanding, and in the long run irresistible—to put such a check upon the universal struggle for privilege and promotion that the fatal schism should not be wrought in us. And so might the nation go on to the accomplishment of the moral ends of democracy; and Europe, looking our way, might take heart and follow our leading. The stake is immeasurably great.

I do not speak of self-sacrifice, because I readily concede that self-sacrifice, in an absolute sense, is uncalled for, and is perhaps inconceivable.

The motive power of this devotion must be a profounder conception of the meaning of life—a *renaissance* of faith, an achievement of spiritual liberty.

It is, perhaps, impossible to say what shall be the terms of the servitude into which men are thus willingly to enter. Certainly the gist of the matter is not mere digging or the wearing of hob-nailed shoes—these things may or may not have a place in the programme.

The essential thing is a vital humility and abhorrence of privilege—a perception that social advantages are in truth disadvantages, that culture is overfine or underfine unless it be wrought out in labor and experience, unless it begin with an inner passion of faith and a sacrificial devotion to the concrete ideal.

Such an aristocracy is the necessary complement of democracy. If it come not, democracy must be given up. But let us not yet give it up. Our way out of the blind alley is to rise to the highest occasion of history, and mount over the walls.

CHARLES FERGUSON.

PROFIT-SHARING AND DOMESTIC SERVICE, AS DISCUSSED AT A WOMAN'S CLUB.

THE subject of the paper that day was Profit Sharing—an admirable condensation of Gilman and other authorities, with pertinent comments by the writer. The paper was followed by a brief consideration of the many antidotes which have been advocated as panaceas for industrial discontent—"the malady of the age threatening to retard civilization"—arbitration, productive co-operation, strikes, socialism, etc.—each shown to be a failure compared with the infallible remedy that Profit Sharing promised to be. One speaker said that the review of the prescriptions for industrial discontent reminded her of that custom of ancient Babylon—the taking of the sick into the market-place that every passer-by might pass an opinion upon the malady and prescribe a cure, the majority to have control of the sufferer. For the fever of industrial discontent with which all hand-workers were said to be more or less afflicted, she could believe that the popular remedy was Profit Sharing. What she wanted to know was if Profit Sharing was sufficient for all forms of industrial discontent? Was it equal to that malignant type with which housekeepers were so familiar, usually called *the servant trouble*? Had it ever been tried in the kitchen? Would some one of the club members who had made an exhaustive study of Profit Sharing, and knew all the details of a system demonstrated in the *Bon Marché* of Paris, inform the housekeepers who had little leisure for study, and had well-nigh lost hope of having their lot improved until the Millennium came in, if they, the distressed housekeepers, might safely build any expectations upon Profit Sharing as the cure for industrial discontent in domestic service? Her heart had been strangely thrilled at hearing of a working man in one of the great Profit Sharing mercantile concerns who had reproved a fellow-laborer for breaking something by saying: "Be careful; don't you know that costs *us* five dollars?" She had foreseen what the exercise of such spirit would mean in her kitchen, what it would be if her china could be handled as if it belonged to *us*, and what might result when frugality in groceries and gas was put upon a business basis.